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[For the religious functions of the dabtara in the Ethiopian church, see category 793.]

224 Before
535 going on an elephant hunt, for example, he performed the "boasting dance", "fukkara", largely with his shoulders and upper arms, predicting his feats; and his retainers honored him by declaring their confidence in his prowess, jumping up and down in the "hota" dance, chanting repeatedly:

[539] "Elephant-killer, (to) your home-
elephant-killer, take him home".
(Hunter:) Elephant-killer (I am), to home (I'll take him)."
(Retainers:)" When it (the elephant) will be moving,
he will kill it!"

224 The elephant-killer, considered braver than the lion-
554 killer, was called "addo" and given a special decoration to wear on forehead and upper arm by the king or feudal lord. A warrior who had killed a human enemy was called "geday" (lit. killer) and held prestige equal to the elephant-killer. Now that rifles are used in place of spears, such heroes have become more common and decorations among the Amhara have fallen into disuse.

224 Besides the big-game, edible jungle animals mentioned
825 before under "fauna", there are numerous wild game, mainly gazelles and partridges, hunted near human habitations to increase the food supply and for occasional sport:

Ethiopian duiker - "midaqwa", very common near habitations on the woyna dega, an antelope the size of a small goat, often approaching hamlets at dusk. It is considered the "cattle" of the zar spirits, and sacrifice to them is thus called "midaqwa".

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Bushbuck - "demula", similar but medium-sized ante-

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

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304 the effect of their whiteness. She also tatoos the women's necks up to the cheek, in the shape of concentric necklaces, to make the neck appear longer, a mark of beauty.

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302 The hairdresser, "ras säri" is a woman who operates a traditional beauty parlor. She braids the women's hair front to back in as few as 12 or as many as 32 braids, depending on how much the customer is willing to pay. Her best-paying customers are divorcees looking for husbands, especially during the marriage season that follows the major harvest early in the dry season. A full two-hour job with a maximum of fine braids costs ETH$1.00 (US$0.40), while a simple job producing only few and thick braids, costs only a quarter of that. Many peasant women, and women unwilling to go to this expenditure, usually let their hair grow to a huge bushy crop, halo-like surrounding the skull, occasionally anointing it with butter boiled with "ades" leaves. But divorcees have the expensive hairdo done over as often as once every two months, and have it thoroughly washed during the process, so that their hair is much cleaner than that of married women.

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535 Another occupation of women is that of "azmari", musician-singer-dancer, who performs at more elaborate, wealthier, rural weddings, and nearly all urban ones. This will be described under entertainment. She is often accompanied by a male azmari, who plays the single-string violin or the banjo-type instrument, and who may alternate with her in singing rhymes, but who does not dance.

701 554 It is noteworthy that the military ranking of the commoner-soldiery, which made up the rank and file of the fighters on foot, was not nearly so formal. The fortunes of war, if they did not leave him dead or maimed, could move him upward to lower nobility. Failing to achieve that, veterans could still hope for a modest fief of "gult" land, enabling him to play the "telleq saw" (great man) role over some hapless "gabbar" peasants. Meanwhile, pseudo-"telleq säw" behaved much like the proverbial sergeant of any army, making his men fear him more than any enemy, rewarding them with feasts, in this case of raw beef and medium-alcoholic mead. The only way he could maintain his following of individual-minded Amhara soldiers, each one of whom wanted to be a hero himself, was by continous personal bravery coupled with cleverness in military tactics. But here the similarity ends, for the non-noble chief of Amhara warriors had no pride of a non-commissioned officer; his ambition was to become a real "telleq säw", a minor nobleman owning "rest" lands.

782 726 521 535 Personal bravery was expressed and recalled in formal boasting, a tradition that survives to this day even for such civilian occasions as weddings. Prior to battle each potential hero would go into a personal song and dance called "fukkara". The ceremonial dance accompanying his boast proceeded as follows: Spear, or rifle, held horizontally behind head, just above shoulders; the head moves in increasingly rapid motion from right to

782 left, while boasts are shouted rythmically. Personal
726 boasts are interspersed with shouts of loyalty to the
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535 emperor ("Addis Ababa! Addis Ababa!"), or recalling
past loyal bravery in the service of a provincial chieftain. Fukkara is performed also before the military games of "ganna" on Christmas, and outside the church on Epiphany (Temqät), to express the readiness of the young warriors to defend the faith, and on weddings to boast of warrior ancestors and so impress the in-laws.

[533] The song and dance is also referred to as "dan-kira " (stomping); to distinguish it from the tamer entertainment song, "afan" performed by female "azmari" who perform accompanied by a violin ("masenqo") or banjo ("qrar"), often recounting tales of renown in ballad form. The "fukkara" in military life takes place before the "joy tent" ("das") of the king, before the "denkwan" (from diwan, round cotton or hair tent) of feudal lords on the march; or, in honor of a successful "killer" ("gedday") of a lion, rhinoceros, elephant or human enemy, in presence of the trophy.

[727] The dance after the victorious battle is called "koto". It is a simple jumping up and down, brandishing spear, rifle or stick vertically, reminiscent of the Central and West African dancing to exhaustion. It is accompanied by refrains, shouted frequently in response to impromptu poetry made up to celebrate the event, such as "yebanalal jebo" (the hyena will swallow him, i.e., the slain enemy). This refrain is also used before the battle, to defy the enemy and pretend that victory

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

782 is already assured. It is also performed on Epiphany,
726 to defy human as well as spirit enemiesoof the Faith.
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535 Before battle, it was the response of the simple soldiers, ("wätadär") to the pep-talk ("arraga") given them by the commander, encouraging them to stand their ground.

727 After thevictorious battle, the soldier could look
554 forward to taking part in the royal feasting, the "gabber", and to lording it over the local "gabbar" peasant who had to supply the means and the womenfolk. It is at least part of the basis of the pride (critics say false sense of their own worth) of the free Amhara over subject peoples, enabling evan the simplest soldier to feel that he belongs to the proprietory class. Back home, he therefore despises manual labor, and even in going into battle he used to conscript peasant boys to carry his heavy rhinoceros-hide shield ("gasha"). These boys often became replacements for slain warriors when they could secure weapons, and, in turn, recruited servants for themselves.

411 The typical weapon was the spear (the word "tor" means both war and spear) until replaced in the late 19th and early 20th centuries by rifles, though late-medieval muskets and Ottoman firearms were available to a few from the Portuguese period in the 16th century. The spear, some in use as late as the Italian invasion of 1935/6, sometimes had two or three prongs. Sabers were rare, and available mostley to noble officers. They were of the curved, Damascene type. Daggers of

796 own people and to the Christians of Constantinople.
779 Therefore, she ordered that a tall pole be erected, crowned with a burning torch, called "dämmärä." The present procedure re-enacts this traditional tale, for on the afternoon preceding the 17th huge poles are stacked up, parades circle them, and in the evening the stacks are set afire, lighting up the landscape.

In preparation, some days before Masqal, peasants and townsmen go to the bush to cut long sticks, so that they will be dry in time. Pious persons touch them to the hearthstone and pray that the harvest will be good, [292] so that they will not have to subsist on cabbage (the food of poverty). Even the poorest can bring the plentiful yellow "masqal" daisies, tied to the top of the poles. The stacks are formed on public areas, such as a marketplace, in front of the church, etc. Adults and children parade around them at least 3 times, wearing their best new garments and trinkets. This is an occasion for girls to be seen at their prettiest, and for young braves to boast.

Some of the young men form into groups and dance [535] the "hoya-hoya", refrains of past or future brave deeds. Warriors perform the loyalty jumping-dance shouting "Addis Ababa". Sometimes, when the resinous torches are lit, mock battles develop. Little girls dance ring-around-the-rosy, while little boys may take the occasion to burn scars on their forearms as proof of courage and to be "strong". Pious elders take a brand from the lit bonfire and rekindle their home hearths, in the hope of

291 Men doing physical labor - "boddïna" - lift toga above shoulders to free arms;

- "adägaddäga" - knot toga across chest; wrap-around. (also to tie shammas of debtors to creditors, or prisoners to guard's).

[411] To parry blows - "makkäta" - wrapping toga around left forearm, as shield.

Preparing for battle - "adägaddäga" (see above): knotting shamma across chest, after wrapping it tightly around the waist.

When cold - "zeqzeq läbbäsä" - doubling a heavy shamma (called "kuta" or "derreb") to wrap oneself in completely, even covering covering head, at night.

When hot - a light shamma of muslin ("näṭäla") may be rolled around the head - "tamaṭṭäma". Hence, the turban of priests is called "mäṭamṭamiya", a tight wrap-around of the head by muslin.

[535] When dancing - before "däbtära" (scribe-choristers) begin to dance, in church, they first drape the toga tightly ("shäbash-häbä"), so that the flaps will not drop from the shoulders during the motion.

[765] In mourning - while dancing the funeral motion, accompanying the improvised eulogy, women approach each other holding their own togas outward and horizontal, like huge wings, (as if they were holding a spear like men dancing the "fukkara" boast dance).

201 291 178 685 Some of these expressive ways of draping the shamma are falling into disuse in the towns where the people are more affected by what passes as "modern dress". However, an interesting increase in one way of draping the shamma can be noticed in recent years: Now that debtors are no

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

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291 longer chained to creditors, more frequent knotting-together of the
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685 shamma is taking place, instead.

G. Dance, Chant, Musical Instruments.

535 Amhara dancing falls into three categories: religious dancing, military dance, and the entertainment dance performed by professionals. The first type has already been described in the section on the church.

Military dancing falls into two main categories: the "fukkara" boasting dance accompanied by boasting chant; and the "hotu" loyalty dance accompanied by shouts.

The "fukkara" is the war-boast, before or after battle, and on other occasions, of the individual warrior boasting of himself, sometimes of his kin group. It used to be danced with a spear, now with a stick or rifle. This is held horizontally over the shoulders. During the dance the head moves sideways, right and left. Defiance is shouted at the enemy, be it human, animal, or a supernatural spirit.

In the zar cult, the victory dance ("gurri") of the spirit just after he has entered the body of the possessed, is regarded so much as the "fukkara" type of dance, that the zar gives his identity away by his own version of "boasting" - whereupon the "disease" is diagnosed.

The hotu loyalty dance, by contrast, is a collective dance, most often a jump-dance, in which the multitude of warriors, brandishing their weapons, try to cast fear on the enemy by numbers, sound, and expression of intense loyalty to their common leader. The name itself is composed of "ho", onomatopoetic for shouting, "ta" signifying the collective suffix (all together). The following are common variations:

"Cho - cho" - simple shouting in unison, ("qärärto").

"Yebahalal Jeb-o" - "The hyena will swallow him (i.e. the enemy)."

"Wardaw sheb-o" - "crow's beak" (i.e. the vultures will feed on the enemy).

"Addis Abäba" - (lit. "New Flower", name of capital) - shout of

loyalty to the central government, since the late 19th century.

"Aya-ho-ho, mätä näw delēy" - (lit."Ayahoho, tonight will be my victory), signifying "we'll win yet"; also sung teasingly at weddings.

The "hotu", though a strictly male dance, is often accompanied by the rythmic handclapping ("anchäbächchäbä") of the women; also the female joyshout "ellel"; sometimes also by the "käbäro" drum.

While the individual dance, "fukkara" is most often used at weddings, the collective "hotu" is performed at public occasions such as church parades on Tenqät (Epiphany), St. George's day, etc, also on some of the new civil holidays such as the annual coronation anniversary.

Some observers have regarded the "fukkara" boast dance as more Middle Eastern, and the "hotu" (including the possible equivalent "dankira" leap of the zar cult) as more African. But it is doubtful whether such a distinction can be made.

The entertainment dance, "eskesta", is a shoulder dance performed by either a man or woman, recently more commonly by women. Of all the dances, it seems the most typical Amhara, for the performer if too proud to use hips or legs as southern Ethiopians would. It is performed by "azmari" or similar professionals, wherever crowds gather, e.g. at "inna" near a marketplace. In the dance, the shoulders are moved rapidly in a variety of motions, often circular, with intermittent forward and backward jerks, to the beat of a drum. A teasing element is sometimes introduced by women performers, who thrust their breasts forward and make the cross suspended from the matab neckcord dance on and off the bulging breasts. The performer accompanies the motion with audible gasps of air drawn through the teeth, producing sounds like "hs,hssess,hst,hssessess", hence the name "eskesta". The audience, when moved, loosens up in the

535 shoulders and hisses along ("tekäsha wärrädä"). This dance, therefore is often used to warm up an audience before the next performer begins the "zäffän" chant, the high-pitched wailing song of the women.

533 The "zäffän" chant is accompanied by less frenzied shoulder movements, the head raised forward, and the singer chanting "up" at the sky, not forward toward the audience. This gradually changes the performance from the sensual to the spiritual. There are several variations of "zäffän":

"zäffän awärrädä" - loud, strident, high-pitched chant, mostly performed by women in public entertainment, in which the audience soon participates as chorus; accompanied by shoulder dance.

"zäffän engorgorra" - softly hummed chant, expressing philosophical sadness. Frequent at portions of the funeral chants and at ecclesiastical chanting of poetry ("genyē") performed by male dabtara.

Professional entertainment singers may be recognized "azmari" hired e.g. for weddings, when they also play such musical instruments as the "masenco" (single-string violin) and "grar" (banjo). Or they may be wandering minstrels ("namina").

The "gena" sung in church by the "däbtära" choristers are rhymes that follow pattern and content of the psalms. Young dabtara compete with each other both as composers and as performers, for their careers depend on the critiques of the old connoisseurs. Little boys begin to chant the syllabic alphabet, as soon as they go to church school, and this pedagogic recitation is called "meleket" or "yäzema melekt" (Geez "malekta"), which may originate from the word for "gospel", or the word for "trumpet" ("mälakat"). Chants taken from the church are sung by children in a similar manner as Western Christmas carols: "Säba segäl" (three wise men), "Buhe bälu" (let all say buhe), etc.

X 794 so that the patient "does not get hurt" in the violent twirling
776 (much as "mizo" protect a wife against her husband). The zar spirit appreciates these acknowledgements and is thus open to negotiations, especially during the "honeymoon".

Only rarely does a male zar "possess" a male human. In this case it is considered not very difficult to come to terms with him and turn him into a protective spirit, through regular financial sacrifices, special attire, and other physical adjustments. Zar doctors seek out powerful male zars whom they need as protective and guiding spirits in their profession. Powerful warriors who have seemed to have a charmed life are believed under such protection - which makes a male more
[674] masculine. Consistently successful thieves who always seem to elude capture are believed to be under such protection. This is said to frighten even the police (or at least offers a ready alibi).

X 794 A patient under active treatment by a "zar" doctor is called
755 "tamami" (lit. the one being cared for). The first step in the procedure is the diagnosis, i.e. the identification of the specific zar personality that has possessed the patient. This is usually done at night, for the "zar" hide in daytime and roam at night - their element.

When darkness has fallen, the patient is brought to the hut of the zar doctor. Here the zar disciples, mostly women, are assembled, seated quietly, perhaps talking in subdued tones, or spinning cotton thread. Incense is burning, there is a low, rythmic drum beat, occasionally
X 794 broken by chants accompanied by rythmic handclapping. Member after
755 member rises individually, "when the spirit moves her" and begins to
535 perform her "gurri", with slight variations according to her particular zar. The "gurri" is a movement that begins with the shoulders (typical

794 of Amhara dancing), while the performer is yet seated, and continues
755 while she rises. Head and shoulders move forward and backward, sometimes
● 535 in horizontal direction, sometimes rotating clockwise, sometimes counterclockwise. Nearing the orgiastic climax, the possessed proceeds to twirl like a top, faster and faster, until she drops in a heap. Habitues can go on for 20 minutes, and be ready for another movement an hour later.

While watching this over and over again, the patient may herself in time be moved to do likewise, though at first clumsily. This is a good sign, for it means that her zar has consented to dismount from his "riding" position, and is beginning to "descend" into the possessed person itself. The "gurri" is regarded as the "victory dance" of the zar, much like a hunter who has wounded and felled his deer. There is a strong element of struggle in the "gurri" dance, like the frantic death-
[831] throes of an animal about to surrender its individual existence. It is also the climax of the magical coitus (much like the bride who is "conquered" on her wedding night).

X 794 The patient is now in a trancelike state, considered in communica-
755 tion and partly identified with the zar, but yet open to urgings by the doctor. More incense is burned, close by, to make the new and as-yet unidentified zar feel cozy and put him in a benevolent, cooperative mood. Great care must be taken prior to the diagnosis. For this reason no poetry is sung to him and no gift given as yet, for the wrong king might insult him - he insists on his own, individual cult. When the patient dances subsequent "gurri", the zar doctor becomes increasingly certain whether the zar is male, or female, evil or mischievous, "neglected" or offended.

X 794 755 535 The specific personality and identity of the zar is revealed later during the course of the diagnosis, when the zar, using the body of the patient, dances the "fukkara" dance. This is considered the equivalent of the "boasting dance" of the Amhara warrior on the eve of battle, which goes by the same name. Thus the zar reveals his "färäs sem" (war name; lit. horse name, i.e. knighthood name), much like an Amhara feudal knight. Since formal "boasting" is highly individualistic, this means that the zar has come out of hiding, like a warrior who emerges from ambush. The dance itself is just as individualistic and irregular, therefore called "dankira", and may include the brandishing of sticks (as if they were spears) or jumping up and down.

X 794 755 Once the patient has proceeded to such expressive behavior, the zar doctor claims that he "knows" the identity of the zar. The doctor now asks the zar a series of leading questions, and the patient usually does not fail to respond with the "truthful" answers. Finally the name of the zar is openly proclaimed. Certain zars are stubborn, hide their identity in various subterfuges, so that the battle of wits between the zar doctor and the zar is a lengthy and difficult one. But the former nearly always wins out and announces his diagnosis.

Thereupon the zar doctor proceeds to decide what course of treatment [782] to follow. The zar is asked, through the mouth of the patient, what offense has been committed against him; what he would like to receive as "mïqwädäsha" love-gift in order to "pardon" the iniquity, or as damages for the "insult" or "neglect". Finally the zar is asked what he will demand in regular offerings in order to remain on good terms with the possessed, to plague her less and only at regular intervals, and, perhaps, to become her protective spirit. On the basis of the replies, the patient is

X 794 796 [688] realizing that her "zar" had insulted the powerful one of Salamtew. Back on her throne, Lady Sälämtew harshly admonishes the audience for dozing, for whispering, for laughing, and some for having taken food and drink during the previous "gurri". This inattentiveness is an insult to her zar, and she threatens to recess the convention if it continues. But then she sugarcoats the threat by calling for another round of refreshments.

[853] Some of the babies in the rear had cried, and were nursed by their mothers. This had also been done by some of the possessed women previously, sometimes within half an hour after the exhausting "gurri". Motherhood and zar devotion evidently did not conflict.

[123] Lady Sälämtu used this intermission to send the foreigner word promising "I shall appoint you a zar as your weqabi (protective spirit)". When she saw that he had drunk some of the barley beer which she had ordered to be served on the tablet of her zar. This time she addressed him in the female gender again, just as she had used a male gender in addressing her female devotees. The zars are believed to enjoy playing their game of turning nature upside down.

X 794 535 796 About 1A.M., everyone rose, except the poet and the drummer. Fresh incense was heaped on the burners. Tired and partly intoxicated members of the audience were shaken awake. For now they were to witness the "fukkara", the individualistic "boasting dance" of Lady Sälämtew's zar. It was a spastic bobbing up-and-down dance, similar to the "hotu" dance of warriors. The drum beat faster and [293] faster, Lady Sälämtew seemed to forget her dignity, but still waved her strap, the symbol of her seniority, while the devotees shouted

X794 535 796 "ellel" as shrilly as they do outside church during Coptic services. Exhausted, the powerful woman finally collapsed, and the curtain was quickly drawn to hide her during her recovery.

X794 796 Several other zar doctors demonstrated their individual "fukkara" activities. But more and more participants grew inattentive, and some began to doze. Lady Sälämtew declared the session ended at about 513 3 A.M. The women bedded down right on the floor or the mud bench, while the men who lived nearby went home, and others rolled up in blankets and skins just outside the house, under the overhanging roof. It was a cold night, usual during cloudless month of Yäkatit.

The season of the roaming zar spirits had once again been concluded, not to revive in full vigor until after the rainy season half a year later. At the convention much protection had been gained, and old protection reinforced against the many mischievous zars that might plague people in the meantime.

d) Social Aspects of the Zar Cult.

X794 608 The groups of chronically possessed persons who meet regularly as devotees of the zars, in the "wädaja" (lit. love feast), constitute what are called "aqwädash" (sometimes "aqtacha"), face-to-face societies. Their interpersonal relationships soon become social, much like the mähabbär communal worship society of the church. Both establish bonds which, to the Amhara mind, become "artificial kinship". Not infrequently this leads to the establishment of bonds of actual affinal kinship (as described earlier).

X794 712 The parallel can also be applied to an understanding of the leadership involved. Much like the mähabbär is led and blessed by the priest-confessor, so the zar society is led and blessed by the

8: Rey G-5 (1910-1920)1935
MP5 Amhara MP5

796 ments, whilst their shaggy little ponies curveted and plunged like mad things.

Dressed in his magnificent Abyssinian robes, carrying a modern rifle, and mounted on a wonderfully caparisoned black mule, Ras Tafari rode slowly up to the tent and took his seat on the throne surrounded by hundreds of gorgeously clad notables, and facing what was perhaps the most striking contingent of all, the priests, ranged on three sides of a square in front of the throne. Those on the opposite side of the square were all in white; those on the right and left wore robes of such dazzling colouring that in the sun's bright rays it almost hurt one's eyes to look at them. Red, blue, green, orange, purple, every imaginable colour, thickly covered with heavy gold and silver embroideries, and gold ornaments and head-dresses. And as if this orgy of colour were not enough, servants held scores of gaudy coloured gold-embroidered and much befringed and tasselled umbrellas over them.

796 778 534 Many of the priests carried magnificent crosses of gold and silver, others their long silver or ivory-handled praying-sticks, whilst some held various musical bell-like instruments, and about half a dozen managed large drums—things about three feet high made of silver with copper bands. Particularly striking were the dresses of ten young boys bearing golden crowns, symbolical of the ten commandments; while the *Tabots* brought from the neighbouring churches were very gorgeously bedecked. It was a wonderful and barbaric sight.

796 535 And then the Dance of the Priests began. Low chanting without music at first, followed by slow graceful movements of all their hundreds of arms in fine

8: Rey G-5 (1910-1920)1935
MP5 Amhara MP5

time to the rhythm, then the little bell cymbals joined in, and finally the big drums.

All this time the long lines of priests were advancing and retiring, turning this way and that, their bodies swaying to the music. The time got quicker and quicker, others joined in, their movements became accentuated and their voices rose to a climax; then quite suddenly sound and movement ceased and the long lines were quite still.

After this, passages were read from enormous silver-covered Bibles, and with a final boom of the drums it was all over—a morning's journey back through the centuries, probably unique in the world in its character.

The Abyssinian Easter falls a week later than our own and is the occasion of great feasting; much rifle firing takes place the night before (or used to two years ago when ammunition was more plentiful), and much eating and drinking, on the day itself. And I am bound to say they must need it, for they have been fasting for forty days, and for the two previous days have eaten nothing at all.

Bands of priests visit the principal houses, soliciting alms, and I find the following description of one of these visits in my diary:

"Soon after breakfast a party of about five priests accompanied by attendants came up the drive, stationed themselves in front of the house, and began to sing and ring bells to wish us a prosperous Easter. Some of the priests wore their gorgeous vestments, and all had brilliant green or red silk parasols fringed with gold braid. We sent them out a small offering, which appeared to please them very much.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

kindles artistic expression, so the poet could wax eloquent over Gondar's decadence at the close of the eighteenth century:

> Beautiful from its beginnings, Gondar, hope of the wretched!
> And hope of the great, Gondar, without measure or bounds!
> O dove of John, Gondar, generous-hearted, mother!
> Gondar, never bowed by affliction!
> Gondar, with its merry name!
> Gondar, seat of prosperity and of savoury food!
> Gondar, dwelling of King Iyāsu and of mighty Bakāffā!
> Gondar, which emulated the city of David, the land of Salem!
> She will be a myth unto eternity.
> How is it she has been destroyed like Sodom, and without any guilt?[9]

So, while the reputation of the Gondar monarchy grew dim, that of the town as a center for religious studies continued unabated. Gondar was the most famous place in the country for instruction in art, music, dance, poetry, and the great books of the Ethiopian Church, and young men continued to travel great distances to drink at such sources. The descendants of royalty somehow made their adjustment. In the middle of the nineteenth century, Arnauld d'Abbadie finds them making paintings and illuminating manuscripts.

At this late date, one more personality of stature emerges from Gondar. This time it is not a king but a *dabtarā*, or man of religious learning—Alaqā Gabra Hānnā. Gabra Hānnā was born in the district of Foggarā on the east coast of Lake Ṭānā. His pursuit of religious studies as a youth took him to Gondar, where he did well and before long became a teacher in the church of Ba'ātā Māryām. Subsequently he was made head of the church, receiving the customary title of *alaqā*.

While at Ba'ātā, Alaqā Gabra Hānnā invented a new style of dance for the clergy. In the traditional style of *aquāquām*, the bodies and sticks of the dancers move up and down, punctuating the flow of chant with alternately gradual and abrupt vertical movements. Alaqā Gabra Hānnā, inspired by the lateral movement of the waves at Lake Ṭānā and of the bamboo reeds in the breeze at its shore, taught that bodies and sticks should sway from side to side. This innovation was rejected by the conservative clergy at Gondar, but it was carried by his son Taklē to Dabra Tābor and from there spread elsewhere.

Alaqā Gabra Hānnā became most famous, however, for his quick and biting wit. So prolific and beloved were his witticisms that in a collection of some three hundred old parables and anecdotes published in Addis Ababa in 1955, no fewer than 25 per cent are devoted to stories about him.[10] After reaching prominence through his teachings and sayings, Alaqā Gabra Hānnā

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

Poetry stands as the most appreciated of all traditional forms of expression, and nearly two-thirds of the secondary and half the college students state that they compose Amharic verse themselves, on occasions ranging from public celebrations to private moments of great joy or sorrow. This is as might be expected in view of the tremendous importance of poetry in traditional Amhara culture (see chapters vi and vii). Painting, on the other hand, has played a rather inconspicuous part in Abyssinia. (Its genuine achievement in the high culture, the often remarkable Ethiopian miniatures, is frequently repudiated by modernizing Ethiopians for being too "backward.") Those students who do prefer Ethiopian-style paintings explain their preference on the grounds that they find them more intelligible and closer to Ethiopian life, and stress their value as reminders of Ethiopia's past.[28] The majority who prefer European-style paintings offer primarily mechanical reasons; they find them more "efficient," "systematic," and "accurate"—more "up-to-date."

In response to a question on their favorite type of foreign music, the students gave a wide variety of answers, ranging from "Oriental" and "religious" to "Rose, Rose, I Love You" and "Mozart." By far the most frequently mentioned musical preference was "classical" (20 per cent). This was followed by approximately equal percentages of preference for American popular songs; jazz and swing; rock 'n' roll; and Sudanese music. Of foreign dances, the most popular are the waltz and the tango (17 per cent each), followed at some distance by rock 'n roll, cha cha cha, and jitterbug. In their movie preferences, finally, historical (17 per cent) and educational (12 per cent) films are the favorites, followed by war, detective, and adventure films.

One other area of consumption should be discussed in this context: the use of cigarettes. To the tradition-minded Amhara smoking symbolizes all that is objectionable in Western culture, while to some of the modern adolescents it symbolizes the excitement and "life" of modernity. The number of these latter is not really very high, at least not among those still in school; but it is noteworthy that emphatic rejection of smoking by most of the students is based primarily on the rationalistic arguments that it is injurious to health and wastes money, rather than on the traditional argument that it is sinful and counter to Christian custom. The most violent reactions of any, however, were aroused by the question: "How do you feel about women smoking?" In the secondary school sample to which this question was posed, disapproval was practically unanimous, and the comments included "makes me ashamed," "it is scaring," "I could choke her to death," and "worse than hell itself."

A few minor differences in taste appear in connection with differences in sex and school attended. The female students in our secondary school sample show a greater partiality to native foods than do the males, and, on the other hand, greater interest in Western music and dance. Peculiarities in the sub-

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cultures of different schools account for a few other minor variations. Thus, for example, preference for Scottish dance is expressed chiefly among students of a school run by a British staff; the only kind of foreign music preferred by students of the Theological School is Sudanese music, that is, the kind most similar to Ethiopian music; and the University College, most urbane of the Ethiopian schools, is the only one where a majority of respondents indicated that they enjoy smoking.

Of all the differences, the most conspicuous is that between the secondary

TABLE 10

AESTHETIC PREFERENCES OF STUDENTS

Area of Consumption	Percentage of Students Who			Number
	Prefer "Traditional" or "Ethiopian" Forms	Prefer "European" or "Foreign" Forms	Indicate No Preference	
Dress for women	85	15	0	(700)
Food	80	16	4	(700)
Cigarettes*	71	10	19	(700)
Dress on holidays	70	26	4	(700)
Poetry	67	26	7	(700)
Music	62	35	3	(700)
Manner of eating†	40	58	2	(700)
Dance	38	56	6	(700)
Drink	24	56	20	(700)
Painting	23	67	10	(700)

* "Like to smoke" versus "do not like to smoke."

† Combines responses on "*gursha*" and eating in common or at individual places, which were practically identical.

school students and the college students. For in each of the areas discussed above in which traditional or Ethiopian patterns were set alongside European or foreign patterns, *the move from the secondary level to college level was accompanied by a decrease in preference for traditional patterns.*

If now we overlook these differences and calculate the total response, we obtain the profile shown in Table 10, which provides some idea of the range of variation in the students' taste with regard to items from Ethiopian and foreign cultures.

Morals.—The moral values reinforced during traditional Amhara adolescence are by no means rejected during modern Ethiopian adolescence, but their significance is somewhat attenuated due to the new conditions of life in

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Synchronization and Privacy

*121 181 571 The degree of independence that exists in Amhara society may be further assessed by focusing on certain abstract properties of its organization as well as on the concrete institutions just discussed. In this context two variables are particularly relevant. One, degree of synchronization, concerns the extent to which the behavior of the individuals in group activities is strictly controlled and co-ordinated. The other concerns the extent to which the individual may be free from the intrusion of others when he desires privacy.

Except in the area of protocol and etiquette at the royal court, synchronization is conspicuously lax among the Amhara. Ample scope is left for individual whim and impulse in nearly every area of concerted activity. Groups of people going on a trip, for example, make little attempt to start at the same [476] time or to keep abreast of each other. Carefully co-ordinated teamwork is scarcely known in manual labor. Military units proceed, not in squads and [704] platoons, but as masses of individuals.

*121 181 571 533 • 535 The lack of synchronization in singing and dancing is perhaps the most striking case of all, for in these activities the participating individuals are supposed to be performing in unison. Yet the choirs of *dabtarā* sing with little regard for the standard line; each chorister sings as the spirit moves him, and the resulting cacophony is punctuated from time to time as some voice stands out by intoning a phrase with new energy a few beats before or after the majority of his fellows. A similar phenomenon occurs in dance, where what apparently is intended to be a symmetry of motion appears rather as a cohort of individual movements.* The impression left by such performances is that the Amhara accord a high degree of independence to the individual whenever he does take part in collective enterprises.

*121 181 571 [591] [576] The Amhara likewise maintain a high degree of respect for individual privacy, despite the hierarchical character of their society. This is shown, first, in the expectation that each nuclear family should inhabit its separate dwelling. The individual home is regarded with great respect; no one, not even a relative, presumes to enter another's home without being properly acknowledged and escorted inside. When possible, private quarters are isolated from those where guests are entertained. The ideal Amhara household, [592] found among the well-to-do, contains separate buildings for private quarters [342] (*ilfiñ*) and for the hall where company is received and entertained (*addārāsh*).

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* At times, it may be noted, when more complex ceremonies permit a plurality of musical and choreographic themes to be going on simultaneously, despite the lack of synchronization the over-all aesthetic effect is often quite impressive. Such is the case, for example, in the ceremonial procession on Ṭimqat day described in chap. iii.

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in the same half-interested manner in which the shepherd directs cattle by throwing stones.

The effect of Amhara socialization, then, is to inhibit rather than to stimulate the development of individuality. The spirited and expressive Amhara child of two or three is conditioned to become, for the rest of his childhood and to a large extent throughout life, taciturn, fearful, and slightly morose.

The traditional system of formal education is no less indifferent to the personality of the learner. The atmosphere of the schools where reading is taught is harsh and punitive. Pedagogy at all levels of instruction is based on repetition and memorization, with strict adherence to the conventions preferred by the teacher.* The traditional ban on the teaching of writing may also be related to the desire to keep the student's mind on received formulations. Amhara formal education in no wise seeks to cultivate the individual, but aims solely to prepare cultural specialists who will be able to perform the rituals and perpetuate the teachings of the Ethiopian Church. The instruction of noble children, finally, in the arts of riding, swimming, shooting, and playing the lyre has more to do with the transmission of the manners and skills appropriate to a position of high status than with a concern for personal development.

Music and Art

Music and dance are greatly enjoyed by the Amhara, but little attention is given to the cultivation of their forms or the refinement of their performance. The music is monodic, both melodically and rhythmically, and, except for some intricately structured accelerandos in certain religious hymns, consists chiefly in the indefinite repetition of a number of very limited musical ideas. Dance forms are still more limited and repetitive. In both genres, variation and the development of personal styles are not encouraged. Innovation, particularly in religious forms, is likely to meet strong resistance; witness the vigorous rejection of Alaqā Gabra Hānnā's innovations in dance by the masters at Gondar.

Like music and dance, Amhara design provides little scope for the free play of imagination. In pottery, basketry, and even in such antique ornamentation as appears on the coins and stelae of Aksum and the churches of Lalibela, the recurring style is that of the continuous repetition of simple geometric patterns. Painting provides a richer medium, but here again individuality is carefully constricted. The subject matter of pictures is limited by tradition to scenes concerning the life of Christ and the saints, and to the *res gestae* of emperors. The manner of treatment of these themes is

* A partial exception to this—the teaching of *qenē*—will be discussed below.